



**CAUSE CELEBRÉ** – Uncle Sam was the man of the hour all last week, as Duxbury residents came out in force to celebrate the nation's birth. Lady Liberty, a.k.a. Laurie Hamilton Ehlke, hitched a ride with Uncle Sam (her father, Jack Hamilton) for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade. Ehlke and her children, who marched in the parade as well, were visiting from Marino, California.

*Photo by Josh Cutler*

## Bonfire Caps Festive 4th Weekend

Thanks to a last minute wind shift, Saturday's bonfire went off without a hitch, topping off what was by all accounts a very successful July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend celebration.

"There were spritz's of rain, and it got real windy, with the wind blowing towards the people and the dune grass," said Joan Edgar, co-chairman of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Committee. "But the wind shifted towards the water and we were able to

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set off the bonfire right at 9 pm."

Local band, The Infractions, played pop tunes as the bonfire burned, and grandparents joined their grandchildren to dance on stage. Organizers es-

timated roughly 3,000 people attended.

"There was really something for everyone," Edgar said.

One young child had to be transported to a local hospital to be treated for sand in his eye, but otherwise the beach party went smoothly. Last year the bonfire was lit prematurely by vandals before the official ceremony was scheduled to begin.

This year's parade may have

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moved a little slower than in year's past due to the heat, but there were more floats than any prior year, with a total of fifteen, according to Edgar.

Following a year's sabbatical, the Tinkertown Neighborhood Association won first prize for Maxi Floats, as they did in 2000. Other winners included the Duxbury Police Dare Program mini float, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>d</sup> Mass Volunteer Infantry marching band, the Lonesome Jukebox rock band and the Duxbury High School Jazz Band.

This year's theme was "Heroes of the Red, White and Blue" and the Margery Parcher Cup was awarded to Duxbury's fire and police departments. Fire Chief Bill Harriman accepted the award, noting that 2002 was a trying year for everyone.

Even in the extreme heat, thousands turned out to watch the parade, though some participants noticed that the crowd wasn't quite as dense as usual.

"It was certainly really hot for the participants," Edgar said, "but they all enjoyed [marching] anyway."

Jack Hamilton, a.k.a. Uncle

Sam, agreed that it was a lovely parade, but hot. He originally declined to portray Uncle Sam, until he was told he would be riding in a convertible. Hamilton took further measures to stay cool, bringing a cooler full of cold towels to cool his feet.

Being one of the Grand Marshals of the parade was very special to former selectman Margaret Kearney.

"I marched in the parade as a girl scout and as a selectman, so being grand marshal was very special, and was a nice way to end [nine years as selectman]," Kearney said.

Kearney, a lifelong resident, has never missed a July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, and plans to join the organizing committee next year.

"It's always been my favorite Duxbury tradition."

Kearney's co-grand marshal was Barry Wirt, who also happens to be an old neighbor of Kearney's on Mayflower Lane.

Wirt was co-chair of the Parade Committee in 1996, and chairman from 1997-2000. He was responsible for reviving the bonfire as part of the town's July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

Consensus among local safety officials is that the holiday weekend was a success.

# Duxbury Clipper

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The July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday "scares harbormasters to death," according to Harbormaster Don Beers. His office doubled and tripled its patrols all weekend, to make sure they were visible, and to let people know they were available to help if needed.

"You have to be a good mariner to boat safely at night, and we had a lot of activity, more so than last year, but there were no problems.

"The only painful thing we had to do was restrict access to the beach," said Beers. The beach had to be closed each day Wednesday through Saturday, for an hour or so mid-day to maintain the 500 car limit.

"It was a magnificent weekend. Very well-attended, and very well behaved," Beers said.

Police Chief Mark DeLuca concurred.

"It was orderly and uneventful [for police], which is nice," DeLuca said. "Everyone was tremendous, and it was a great family atmosphere."

Both Beers and DeLuca reported no holiday-related arrests or significant problems over the weekend.

For parade workers, pulling off such a smooth celebration takes a lot of planning. The parade committee started planning in February, meeting every other Tuesday night until the beginning of May, when it started meeting every week.

"We made a lot of decisions during the meetings, but a lot of the actual work gets done between meetings," said Edgar, who didn't want to estimate how many hours she put into planning, fearing it would scare her off from being on the committee next year, which she does plan to do.

This year's committee will meet once or twice to recap all the events, and the planning for next year's celebration will begin in full in February, though there may be a preliminary meeting in the fall.